

REPORT CONTENTS





The University of Saskatchewan's main campus is situated on Treaty 6 Territory and the Homeland of the Métis. We pay our respect to the First Nations and Métis ancestors of this place and reaffirm our relationship with one another.

OVDR GUIDING PRINCIPLES

VISION

We excel at strengthening the research capacity in the College of Medicine by providing support for the research community with transparency, accountability, and equity.

MISSION

We are leaders in the development and advancement of essential initiatives that foster an equitable and transparent culture of research excellence.

We enable meaningful health research across the College of Medicine and encourage interdisciplinary collaboration, seeking to empower and engage our faculty, staff, and students to challenge the boundaries of knowledge creation.

VALUES

- Accountability
- Equity, Diversity and Inclusivity
- Transparency
- Collaboration
- Respect
- Fairness
- Consistency
- Adaptability
- Dedication
- Excellence





WORDS FROM THE VICE-DEAN

I am delighted to introduce the 2023 Internal Initiatives Report. This is the fourth edition describing the impact of the College of Medicine's internal funding on the research productivity of our faculty, staff, and trainees.

Two remarkable findings are coming from the analysis of these reports. The first is that despite ever decreasing internal funding our researchers maintained research productivity according to a principle loved by our funders i.e. "doing more for less". The second is that the investment in the academic research enterprise is both fiscally responsible and successful as our researchers for every dollar of internal investment bring three dollars in external funding.

I am impressed by the dedication and research ability of our faculty, staff, and trainees. Thank you all for this wonderful effort!

After seven years of service as Vice-Dean Research I am taking a six-month-long administration leave from the 1st of January 2024. I hope to come back rejuvenated and with a new perspective and fresh ideas from the places I will visit.



I am thrilled that Dr. David Cooper agreed to fill in as Acting Vice-Dean Research. Thank you, Dave! The helm and our great Office of Vice-Dean Research is yours to lead!

March Routon .

MAREK RADOMSKI MD, PhD, DSc, Dhc, MPAL, FCAHS Vice-Dean Research, College of Medicine

ASSISTANT DEAN GRADUATE STUDIES

Since assuming the Assistant Dean of Graduate Studies role at the College of Medicine in July 2022, I have passionately pursued a vision centred on enhancing the well-being, studentship, and resource accessibility for graduate students. Emphasizing a student-centric approach, I have focused on direct engagement and policy improvements, supported by a dedicated team in the OVDR.

Significant strides have been made in student engagement and program development. I have actively engaged with students and faculty, leading to substantial improvements in communication and policy. Financial support for students has been a key focus, with initiatives aimed at increasing stipends in response to rising living costs and addressing concerns regarding tuition and housing.

As I continue in this role, I am committed to maintaining an ecosystem where wellness and inclusion are prioritized, ensuring that our scholars reach their full potential in an environment where excellence is nurtured, celebrated, and rewarded.

RESEARCH DIRECTOR

Reflecting on this challenging year, I am immensely proud of our resilient team in the Office of the Vice-Dean Research. Despite much adversity their unwavering commitment propelled our research endeavors forward.

Our grants team, operating with scientific precision, navigated funding challenges seamlessly, ensuring budget cuts did not hinder program effectiveness. This report attests to our sustained upward trajectory in research success.

In clinical research, the light at the end of the tunnel is visible as we address the last structural items. I am confident that 2024 holds great promise for our clinical trials support team.

I extend heartfelt gratitude to a team whose unmatched hustle propels us to extraordinary heights each year. Their dedication inspires, and together, we emerge stronger from the trials of this year, poised for even greater achievements.





RESEARCH HIGHLIGHTS

RESEARCH-ACTIVE FACULTY:

487

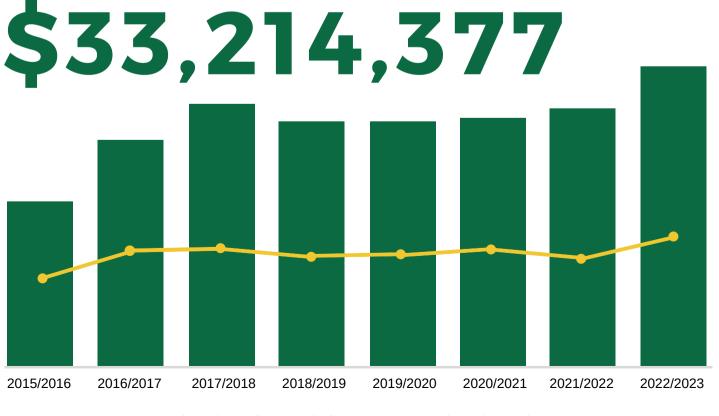
NUMBER OF FACULTY AWARDED PROJECTS IN 2022/2023:

184

In the 2022/2023 fiscal year, researchers in the College of Medicine received \$33,214,377 dollars in research funding, including \$4,897,267 in Tri-Agency funding.

In the 2022/2023 fiscal year 184 unique CoM researchers received 419 awards.

RESEARCH FUNDING AWARDED TO_COM FACULTY IN 2022/2023:



Number of Faculty Awarded ——— Number of Awards

DOING MORE

The OVDR has made significant investments in health research. Since 2016, we have developed a series of initiatives to support health researchers by providing bridge funding, researcher start-up packages, project seed funding, as well as trainee (undergraduate and graduate) supports. The university has seen a return from this focused investment, with improvements in university rankings related to clinical health research.

WITH LESS

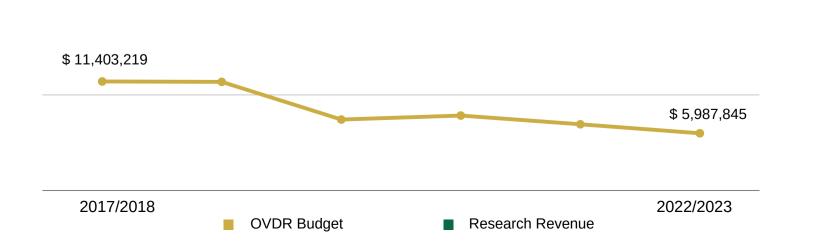
Despite the research budget being reduced by nearly half over the last six years, CoM researchers have worked incredibly hard to maintain a consistent level of research productivity. But with researchers facing a competitive funding landscape and record inflation - continued and increased investment is imperative to support researchers, maximize their potential, and capitalize on their momentum. **301-400** Times Higher Education World University Rankings Clinical and Health Subject Area

The University of Saskatchewan leaped into the 301-400 tier of the Clinical and Health Subject Area, after reaching an overall rank in the 501-600 tier in the prior year's rankings –

helping Usask achieve their highest overall position in these rankings to date.



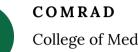
\$ 30,350,397



FACULTY INITIATIVES



RESEARCH START-UP FUNDING



College of Medicine Research Award



COMBRIDGE College of Medicine Bridge Funding



FAIR RESEARCH GRANT

Funding to Ameliorate Interruptions to Research

GRADUATE INITIATIVES



02

03

EMERGENCY LEAVE GRANT PARENTAL LEAVE GRANT MATERNITY LEAVE BRIDGE FUNDING



INTERDISCIPLINARY GRADUATE SCHOLARSHIP



MD-MSC/PHD AND MPT-PHD MATCHING FUNDS PROGRAM

COMTA

COMGRAD

Student Award

College of Medicine Travel Award

College of Medicine Graduate



PUBLICATION FUNDING

UNDERGRADUATE INITIATIVES



BIOMEDICAL SUMMER RESEARCH PROJECTS



DEAN'S PROJECTS

Dean's Summer Research Projects and MD Research Experience



INTERDISCIPLINARY SUMMER RESEARCH PROGRAM

RESEARCH START-UP FUNDING

New researchers often require institutional support to establish productive research programs in advance of generating external research funding. Negotiated as part of the recruitment package, the OVDR accepts applications to provide funding for start-up costs and equipment for a maximum of the first three years of a new faculty members research program.

Start-up funding is a valuable recruitment incentive when seeking to attract world-class faculty members.

OVDR FACULTY START-UP INVESTMENT



From the 2015/2016 fiscal year to December 2023, the OVDR has provided \$12,208,292 in startup funding to



College of Medicine faculty

\$28.6 M

Allowing faculty members to launch their research programs, having secured \$28,573,996 in external funding to date

70

60

COLLEGE OF MEDICINE RESEARCH AWARD (COMRAD)

A competitive funding opportunity open to all faculty members with a primary academic appointment in the College of Medicine. The purpose of the CoMRAD is to provide seed funding for novel pilot and/or feasibility studies that will facilitate future applications to external funding sources on a provincial, national, and global level.

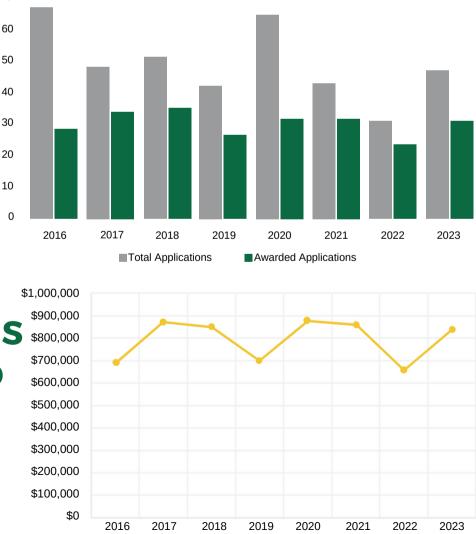
As 2022 projects are still ongoing, return on investment data is calculated from completed projects from 2016-2021.

FUNDED PROJECTS

Since the initiative's initiation in 2016, the OVDR has funded 236 CoMRAD projects.

OVDR FUNDS COMMITTED

From 2016 to 2023 the OVDR committed \$6,358,763.71 to fund this initiative.



UNDERGRADUATE INITIATIVES

RETURN ON INVESTMENT

245

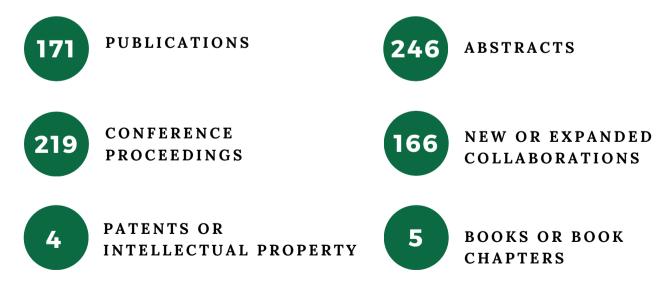
Submissions for external funding



and \$24,140,726 in external funding dollars received so far

DISSEMINATION

CoMRAD Funding has resulted in the following:

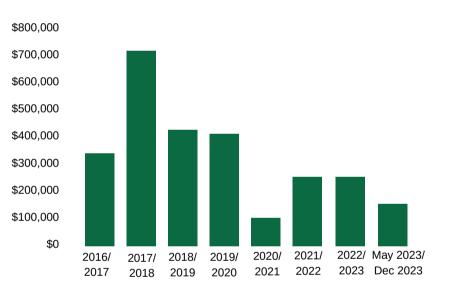


COMBRIDGE

Initiated in 2016, the CoMBRIDGE program seeks to support research excellence and encourage re-application for Tri-Agency funding. Based on availability, Bridge Funding can be obtained by College of Medicine faculty who received a high score in a Tri-Agency competition but were not funded to assist their re-application efforts.

FUNDED PROJECTS

The OVDR has funded 38 CoMBRIDGE projects since 2016. Thirty-seven of these have supported CIHR Project Grant reapplications, and one supported a SSHRC Insight Grant.



OVDR FUNDS COMMITTED

Awarded amounts are dependent on availability of funds, competition program, and number of eligible applicants. To date, \$2,594,000 has been awarded by the CoMBRIDGE program.

RETURN ON INVESTMENT



FAIR RESEARCH GRANT

The FAIR (Funding to Ameliorate Interruptions to Research) Research Grant was established in 2021 to help researchers maintain or revitalize their research programs following a leave from College of Medicine at the University of Saskatchewan.

Applicants may request up to \$10,000 to contribute towards research assistance (personnel to perform data collection, analysis, etc.), travel for research purposes (conferences, workshops, etc.), publication costs, and operating expenses excluding equipment.

The OVDR has funded five Fair Research Grants since it's inception.

EMERGENCY LEAVE GRANT

Available once per student per academic program, College of Medicine graduate students may apply for financial assistance during a medical or compassionate leave occurring prior to the completion of the student's program.

Applicants may receive \$1000/month for up to two months.

PARENTAL LEAVE FUNDING

The College of Medicine has implemented a progressive parental leave grant program intended to support graduate students with growing families. CoM graduate students not receiving other forms of financial support may apply for financial assistance during a leave to serve as the primary care-giver immediately following the birth of a child prior to the completion of the student's program.

Since piloting this program in September 2018, five students have been granted parental leave funding.

MATERNITY LEAVE BRIDGING FUNDING

As a complement to the Parental Leave Grant, the Maternity Leave Bridging Funding initiative was introduced in 2021. The CoM recognizes that students may face delays and funding gaps during the transition to parental leave (e.g. delays in paperwork, needing to take leave early, etc.).

To address this issue, Maternity Leave Bridging Funding will provide \$1,500 to students who have set up parental leave, regardless of the source of funding (e.g. CoM Parental Leave Grant, Tricouncil support, etc.). This funding is payable during the first month of the planned leave or the month prior where a leave begins earlier than originally planned. There have been four students so far who have received this funding.

COLLEGE OF MEDICINE GRADUATE RESEARCH AWARD

The College of Medicine Graduate Research Award (CoMGRAD) is a competitive funding opportunity available to College of Medicine graduate students. The purpose of the CoMGRAD is to provide support to graduate students and faculty supervisors from the College of Medicine who demonstrate a passion for research that has been, or will be, translated into advancements in science.

FUNDED TRAINEES

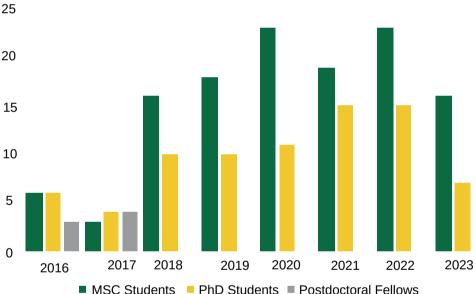
In 2022 and 2023 we awarded 61 new CoMGRADs; 39 at the MSc level and 22 at the PhD level.

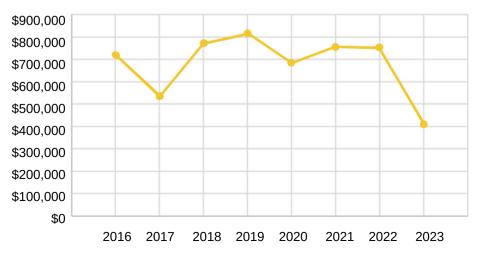
To date, CoMGRAD has supported 209 graduate students and Postdoctoral Fellows.

OVDR FUNDS COMMITTED

In 2022 and 2023, \$1,164,000 was allocated to CoMGRAD awardees.

The OVDR has invested \$5,446,833 to support CoMGRAD trainees since 2016.



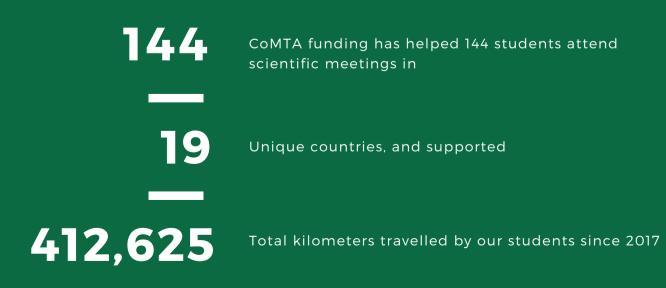


COLLEGE OF MEDICINE TRAVEL AWARD (COMTA)

Graduate students and post doctoral fellows in the College of Medicine are encouraged to participate in national and international scientific conferences and workshops. Trainees may apply to the Conference Travel Fund for up to \$1,500 to support attendance at scientific meetings.

Between 2017 and May 2023, the CoMTA has provided 145 awards to our trainees, for a total program cost of \$174,951.

RETURN ON INVESTMENT



INTERDISCIPLINARY GRADUATE SCHOLARSHIP

The Interdisciplinary Graduate Student Scholarships (IGS) are intended to support graduate students who are conducting interdisciplinary research co-supervised by a faculty member from the CoM and a faculty member from the College of Pharmacy and Nutrition (CoPN). In 2022, the Adil Nazarali Interdisciplinary Graduate Scholarship in Neuroscience was offered as part of the competition to an applicant with a specific research focus in the area of neuroscience.

MD-MSC/PHD AND MPT-PHD MATCHING FUNDS PROGRAM

A matching funds program for MD-MSc/PhD and MPT-PhD students was established in 2021 to catalyze the training of clinician-researchers in College of Medicine. This new program provides an up-front source of funds that can be matched (up to 50%) with supervisor grant funding or scholarships which require matching funds. In 2022 we provided the 40% match of a CoMGRAD award for one MD-MSc student.

PUBLICATION FUNDING

Between the 2019/2020 to 2022/2023 fiscal years, the Publication funding has helped support graduate and undergraduate students, post doctoral fellows, and residents produce:



AVERAGE JOURNAL IMPACT FACTOR



63

PUBLICATION CITATIONS

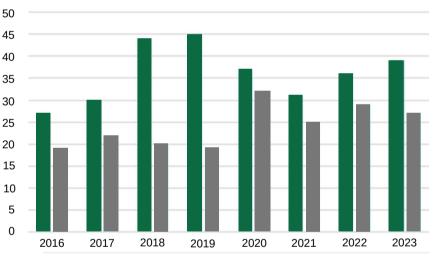
BIOMEDICAL SUMMER RESEARCH PROJECTS

The Biomedical Summer Student Research Program is intended to assist in the research training of our undergraduate students enrolled in the Anatomy and Cell Biology, Biochemistry, Microbiology and Immunology, Physiology, and Pharmacology programs. The intent of these awards is to give students valuable research experience and encourage students to continue on to a graduate studies program.

This is a cost-shared award and supervisors are required to match 40% of the award amount.

FUNDED PROJECTS

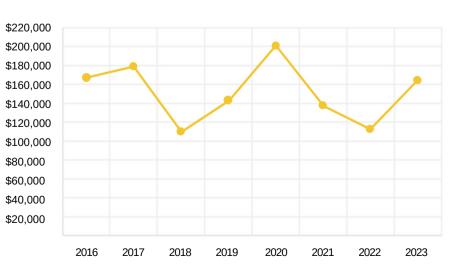
The Office of the Vice-Dean Research has supported 193 undergraduate Biomedical Summer Research Projects since 2016.



Total Applications Awarded Applications

OVDR FUNDS COMMITTED

From 2016 to 2023 the OVDR committed \$1,216,800 to fund this initiative.



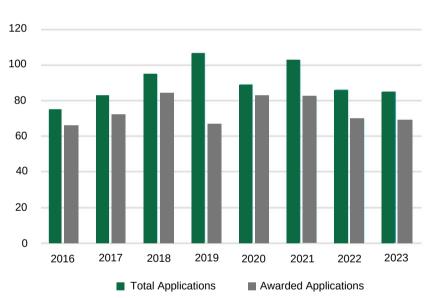
DEAN'S SUMMER RESEARCH PROJECTS

The Dean's Summer Research Projects provide undergraduate medical students with exposure to scientific research. The program is intended to ignite a passion for research in our medical students and facilitate an understanding of the vital role research plays in today's health care.

Dean's summer research students were previously paid by stipend. Due to changes made by the Canada Revenue Agency, as of 2021 all Summer Research student positions must be paid as employment therefore the pay model of this program was adjusted.

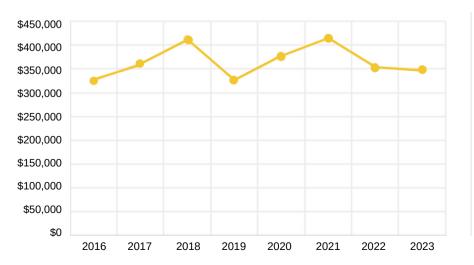
FUNDED PROJECTS

The Office of the Vice-Dean Research has supported 593 undergraduate Dean's Summer Research Projects and Experiences since 2016.



OVDR FUNDS COMMITTED

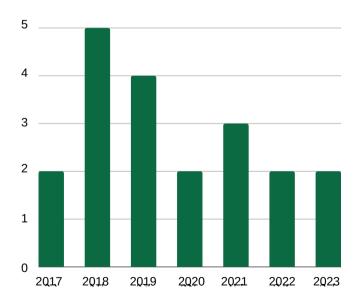
From 2016 to 2023 the OVDR committed \$2,920,597 to fund this initiative.



INTERDISCIPLINARY SUMMER RESEARCH PROGRAM

The Interdisciplinary Summer Research program, founded in 2017, provides competitive undergraduate salary awards to provide research training of summer students enrolled in either the College of Medicine or the College of Pharmacy and Nutrition, co-supervised by a faculty member from both colleges.





FUNDED PROJECTS

Twenty interdisciplinary projects have been funded since 2017, with the total program cost of \$152,421 shared evenly between the College of Medicine and College of Pharmacy and Nutrition.

IN THEIR OWN WORDS...

"My project was absolutely amazing. I did not have a thorough appreciation for the role of research in medicine and have since gained this insight. In fact, I enjoy research to such an extent that I took on two additional projects!"

"It was a very good experience, I would do it every summer if I could."

"I really enjoyed my experience with the Biomedical Summer Research Program. It was an excellent learning opportunity to acquire hands-on training necessary for working in a lab environment. Working in the surgical suite, I learned numerous practical skills that I probably wouldn't have during regular classes."

"This is an amazing opportunity for undergraduate students. It has helped my professional development in many ways: independence, time management, working as part of a team, data management, critical thinking... you name it! I learned a lot about the world of research and the interconnectedness of the university campus."

62% OF 2022 AND 2023 SUMMER STUDENTS REPORTED THEIR RESEARCH EXPERIENCE MADE THEM MORE LIKELY TO PURSUE RESEARCH IN THE FUTURE

| LESS | EQUALLY | MORE LIKELY TO PURSUE |
|--------|---------|-----------------------|
| LIKELY | LIKELY | RESEARCH |
| 2% | 36% | 62% |

74% OF STUDENTS RATED THEIR SUMMER RESEARCH EXPERIENCE AS:

EXCELLENT OR EXCEPTIONAL

FACULTY RESEARCH AWARDS

In 2023 the OVDR launched three new faculty awards to supplement the existing roster of College of Medicine fall awards. Stay up to date on award timelines and recipients on the College webpage: medicine.usask.ca/awards.php

We are proud to announce the inaugural winners of research awards below:



ANNUAL EXCELLENCE IN RESEARCH AWARDS

The Annual Excellence in Research Award recognizes faculty in the College of Medicine who have exhibited the highest level of excellence and had a significant impact on research over the past year.

Dr. Alexandra King, Assistant Professor in the Department of Medicine and Cameco Chair in Indigenous Health and Wellness, was recognized for her leadership, commitment to capacity building, and dedication to the health and well-being of Indigenous People, land and culture-based healing, ethics in Indigenous Research, HIV, HCV, and co-infections, and health system and service transformation.

Dr. Gary Groot, a Professor in the Department of Community Health and Epidemiology, was recognized for his leadership, collegiality, and dedication to health system improvement, cancer research, and First Nations and Metis health research conducted in partnership with Indigenous Peoples and communities.

RESEARCH CAREER ACHIEVEMENT AWARD

This Achievement Award recognizes faculty who have had significant research impact over the course of their career.

Dr. Ali Rajput, Professor Emeritus in the Department of Medicine's Division of Neurology, was recognized for his leadership, innovation, and capacity building through his research in Parkinson's disease, establishment of the Saskatchewan Movement Disorders Program, and impact on patient care.



RESEARCH MINGLING MINDS AWARD



The Mingling Minds in Research Award recognizes individuals or teams in the College of Medicine who have exhibited the highest commitment to conducting interdisciplinary research and approaching research areas with novel, outside of the box approaches.

The Wellness Wheel team was recognized for their innovation, public engagement, and dedication in delivery of a culturally-responsive, community-driven model of care and research in the First Nations communities they serve.

Top photos: Mary Zettl, Danita Wahpoosewyan, Nikki Williamson, Noreen McLenaghan, Mamata Pandey. *Middle photo: (back row)* Vicky Schultz, Stuart Skinner, (front row) Maria Folk, Trisha Campbell, Susanne Nicolay. Bottom photo: Michelle Dornan, Dessie Jo Sutherland, Stacey Naytowhow, Cara Spence.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The OVDR thanks our donors, the Tri-Agency Research Support Fund, and the College of Medicine for our funding. Our work and the consequent returns on investment to students, faculty, the College, the University, the scientific community and the public at large, are made possible only through their generosity.

The OVDR extends its thanks to Shelley-May Neufeld for preparing this report, and to all the incredible staff at the OVDR whose dedication and talent keep our office running.



Sydnie Gengler (Research Navigation Specialist), Chantal Jantzen (Research Financial Analyst). Shelley-May Neufeld (Research Impact Analyst), Megan Truscott (Director of Research), Keleigh Garcea (Project Coordinator), Ally Wiegers (Graduate Programs Coordinator), Nayoung Kim (Student Project Coordinator)



Adam Wandzura, MD Student. Cerebral. 2023.





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